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## Never Justice, Never Peace: Mother Jones and the Miner Rebellion at Paint and Cabin Creeks

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In the 1930's, the Works Projects Administration sought to include unemployed women in work relief programs. Susannah Walker's analysis notes the WPA provided sewing rooms as a gender approved option, limiting women from obtaining needed industrial skills for higher paying jobs in the garment industry. Becca Walton, co-editor and contributor, relates how the incarcerated at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman used sewing skills and creativity to assert their humanity. In *The Mississippi Poor People's Corporation*, William Sturkey describes how clothing production by poor black Mississippians provided for their economic advancement and represented true Black Power in the late sixties and seventies.

"The Dress Makes the Band," the final essay in the collection, profiles the rise of a bohemian culture in Athens, Georgia which visually represented itself through thrift store and secondhand clothing. Elizabeth Hale, contributor and author of the book *Cool Town: How Athens, Georgia, Launched Alternative Music and Changed American Culture*, describes how, in the nineteen seventies and early eighties, mostly middle class students and local nonconformists created a lifestyle and sub-society based on alternative values and expressed it through their music, art, and vintage, thrift store clothes.

Introducing and exploring the themes featured in this series of scholarly essays, Ted Ownby and Jonathan Prude lead the reader to an understanding of common threads that tie these studies together. A list of contributors, along with select illustrations and extensive notes and index, make this a recommended volume for academic libraries with historical and sociological collections on the Southeastern United States.

Melanie Dunn, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

### **Horace Kephart Writings**



George Frizzell and  
Mae Miller Claxton, eds.  
Knoxville: The University of  
Tennessee Press, 2020  
ISBN: 9781621905417  
707 p. \$45.00 (Pbk)

Rarely do I examine a book by putting it on our postal scale to determine the weight. At close to 2.5 pounds, I thought a reader might want to know what was included that make a volume weigh so much. The Table of Contents shows us that the editors were enthusiastic about sharing Kephart's written words. The volume, containing 707 pages divided into 10 Chapters and supported by 3 Appendices, Notes, a Selected Bibliography and an Index, should make any student of Appalachian studies think this collection is a gold mine. The joy of the collection to me was to see a literary giant unfold through the authenticity of Horace Kephart's documented expressions.

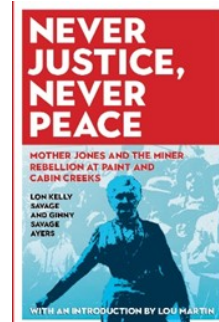
George Frizzell and Mae Miller Claxton organized the many writings included in the Kephart collection into ten chapters: Biography, Family and Friends, Camping and Woodcraft, Guns, Southern Appalachian Culture, Fiction, The Cherokees, Scouting, and Park and Trail. Each chapter is filled with Kephart's rich and engaging written prose. Living the life that he writes about and embracing the Appalachian landscape, Kephart's writings show his passion for the beauty of nature and nature's challenges of a life lived in the out of doors.

Highly recommended for all public libraries, academic libraries, and national park library collections. Illustrations throughout the pages are black and white and help to gain insight into the writings.

Carol Walker Jordan, Ph.D., MLIS

### **Never Justice, Never Peace: Mother Jones and the Miner Rebellion at Paint and Cabin Creeks**

Lon Kelly Savage and  
Ginny Savage Ayers  
Morgantown: West Virginia  
University Press, 2018  
ISBN: 9781946684370  
360 p. \$27.99 (Pbk)



In 24 short chapters, Lon Kelly Savage and Ginny Savage Ayers present a dramatic account of the coal miners' strike and the resulting violent crack-down by mine operators in the Paint and Cabin Creeks region of West Virginia that took place in

1912 and 1913 with famed labor organizer Mary Harris "Mother" Jones playing a starring role.

This book grew out of Lon Kelly Savage's research for his *Thunder in the Mountains: The West Virginia Mine War, 1920-21* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1990). He became particularly interested in Mother Jones. Unfortunately, Savage died in 2004 but his daughter, Ginny Savage Ayers, was able to use her father's notes to write and publish *Never Justice, Never Peace*. The result is a very readable example of labor history. The book contains scholarly apparatus including extensive endnotes, a bibliography of primary sources, and an index yet the writing is very accessible to the non-academic reader.

Reflecting both local and national trends, the strike of 1912-1913 was the culmination of 20 years' worth of attempts at organizing these West Virginia miners into a union in the face of increasingly heavy-handed oppression by mine operators. Adding to the mix was the growing influence of Socialists such as Eugene Debs and Mother Jones while the mine operators generally found sources of support from county and state government officials.

Mother Jones, who had been active in labor organizing for decades, arrived in Charleston, West Virginia by train from Montana once she heard news of the strike in the Spring of 1912. Jones is a fascinating character. Emigrating from Ireland as a child, she began her decades' long career as a labor organizer a few years after losing her husband and children to a yellow fever epidemic in 1867. "Whether she inspired the miners to take action or simply gave voice to the miners' hopes and fears, few witnessed more of the pivotal events of the Mine Wars or more embodied the bravery and spirit of the miners than Mother Jones" (p. 7). She cultivated the image of a grandmother with her white hair and old-fashioned black dresses yet was fiercely outspoken and tough and, as the book illustrates, was a very effective and inflammatory speaker. She was quite strategic and was what we would now call "media savvy" in terms of seeking publicity and giving interviews to newspaper reporters.

An example of Jones's great sense of public relations was her encounter with hostile company guards at the town of Kayford located along Cabin Creek. Accompanied by a *Baltimore Sun* reporter, Jones's solution to being blocked from walking on private (mining company owned) land,

she waded into the shallow waters of Cabin Creek and walked the rest of the way to a more public location where an audience of 200 was waiting to hear her speak. As Savage and Ayers note, this walk through the creek was "a public relations triumph of major proportions" (p. 77) and helped garner national attention to the strike.

Jones was not the only colorful personality in the Paint and Cabin Creeks miner rebellion. Savage and Ayers provide effective short sketches of miners, mine unionizers, mine operators, the mine company guards and state militia leaders who committed acts of violence but also attempted to keep the peace. West Virginia Governors William Glasscock and Mark Hatfield played difficult and somewhat devious roles (the strike overlapped the final months of Glasscock's administration and the first months of Hatfield's). Governor Glasscock is something of a villain as portrayed here as he imposed martial law on the region in response to the ongoing violence. This allowed troops to be brought in and for a series of trials to be held via a military rather than civilian court with dozens of miners and labor agitators, including Mother Jones, imprisoned for months on end in 1913. Governor Hatfield was portrayed a little more sympathetically as someone who had some compassion for the miners. Hatfield was strategic too in his publicly agreeing to many of the strikers' demands and his gradually freeing groups of miners but not actually following through upon what the miners thought had been agreed.

Mother Jones continued to be an active and controversial presence in the labor movement, specially in support of miners everywhere. She returned to the West Virginia coalfields during the violent uprising known as the Battle of Blair Mountain in 1920-1921, well into her eighties.

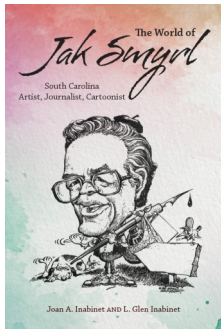
Although the strikes and violence that took place along Paint and Cabin Creeks ended disappointingly for the miners, the book does end on an inspiring note. "But thanks to Mother Jones and countless determined labor and union leaders, miners and their families, the strike on Paint and Cabin Creeks allowed a glimpse of what the power of solidarity could do and [to quote Mother Jones] 'the spirit of resistance awakened in the miners all over the State can never be quenched (p. 279).'"

*Never Justice, Never Peace* would be a very good addition to collections featuring labor and Appalachian history. The significant role of

Mother Jones also makes this book of interest to scholars of women's history. Recommended for both academic and public libraries.

Tim Dodge, Auburn University

***The World of Jak Smyrl: South Carolina Artist, Journalist, Cartoonist***



Joan A. Inabinet and  
L. Glen Inabinet  
Columbia: The University of  
South Carolina Press, 2020  
ISBN: 9781643360492  
368 p. \$34.99 (Hbk)

In the recent biography *The world of Jak Smyrl: South Carolina Artist, Journalist, Cartoonist*, the narrative begins at the end of Smyrl's life as he is honored by the South Carolina General Assembly for his distinguished career as an artist and writer. This narrative structure enables authors Joan and Glen Inabinet to reflect on Smyrl's life and accomplishments, giving perspective to the events which shaped him into an artist with enduring relevance.

The book is divided into four main parts: Smyrl's childhood in Camden, South Carolina; his years as a Marine during World War II; his college days; and his professional career. The first several chapters describe Smyrl's family life in 1920s South Carolina. Oscar Jackson Smyrl, Jr., nicknamed "Jack," was born into a close-knit family in the small southern town of Camden, with a history dating back to colonial times. The authors are highly effective in depicting what it was like to grow up in a town that was a "social mecca" for tourists in the winter, and a vibrant local community during the rest of the year. Smyrl's childhood included silent movies at the Majestic Theatre, visiting families and friends, ice cream at the roller rink, and spiritual revivals. He was part of a never-ending community of siblings, aunts, uncles, and assorted cousins with which to engage in outdoor adventures and "sociable storytelling." Describing himself as "never lonely and never bored," the young Jack developed an active imagination, and by the first grade, he began to experiment with drawing. Early sketches reflected a child's idyllic point of view, yet in reality, it was the time of the Depression and the poor southern

economy resulted in changes in the community and his life.

After his high school graduation, Smyrl enrolled at Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University), but he soon left school to volunteer for the U.S. Marines during the years of World War II. He saw combat in the Pacific and was in North China during the occupation. When the circumstances became overwhelming, he would draw pictures for his comrades to keep their spirits up. The war greatly influenced his life, and several chapters describe his time in the Marines with images of illustrated letters, humorous sketches, and photographs.

After returning from the war, Smyrl studied at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and the University of South Carolina. While at the University, he took art classes and found success in creating illustrations for campus publications. During his senior year, Smyrl made the decision to leave school and apply for his "dream job" as a commercial artist at Columbia's *The State* newspaper. It was then that he dropped the "c" in his first name, famously saying, "I was just a poor artist. I couldn't afford a 'c.'" Smyrl may be especially remembered for his annual pieces about the South Carolina-Clemson rivalry. In fact, he is credited with creating the first fighting Gamecock logo. Smyrl spent over thirty-seven years as *The State's* first artist, but was also a well-known free-lance illustrator, creating comic sketches and artwork for books and other assignments.

Enhanced by photographs and illustrations, *The World of Jak Smyrl* is a well-researched book about a remarkable man. The authors have mined Smyrl's personal papers housed in the Caroliniana Library at the University of South Carolina, as well as numerous personal interviews, to create a compelling account of his life and career. Even readers who are unfamiliar with Smyrl and his vast body of work will appreciate the authors' efforts at creating a "time capsule" that captures small-town life in the rural south, harrowing war-time experiences, and a distinguished career that will be appreciated well into the future.

Kathelene McCarty Smith, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro